

Five Smooth Stones

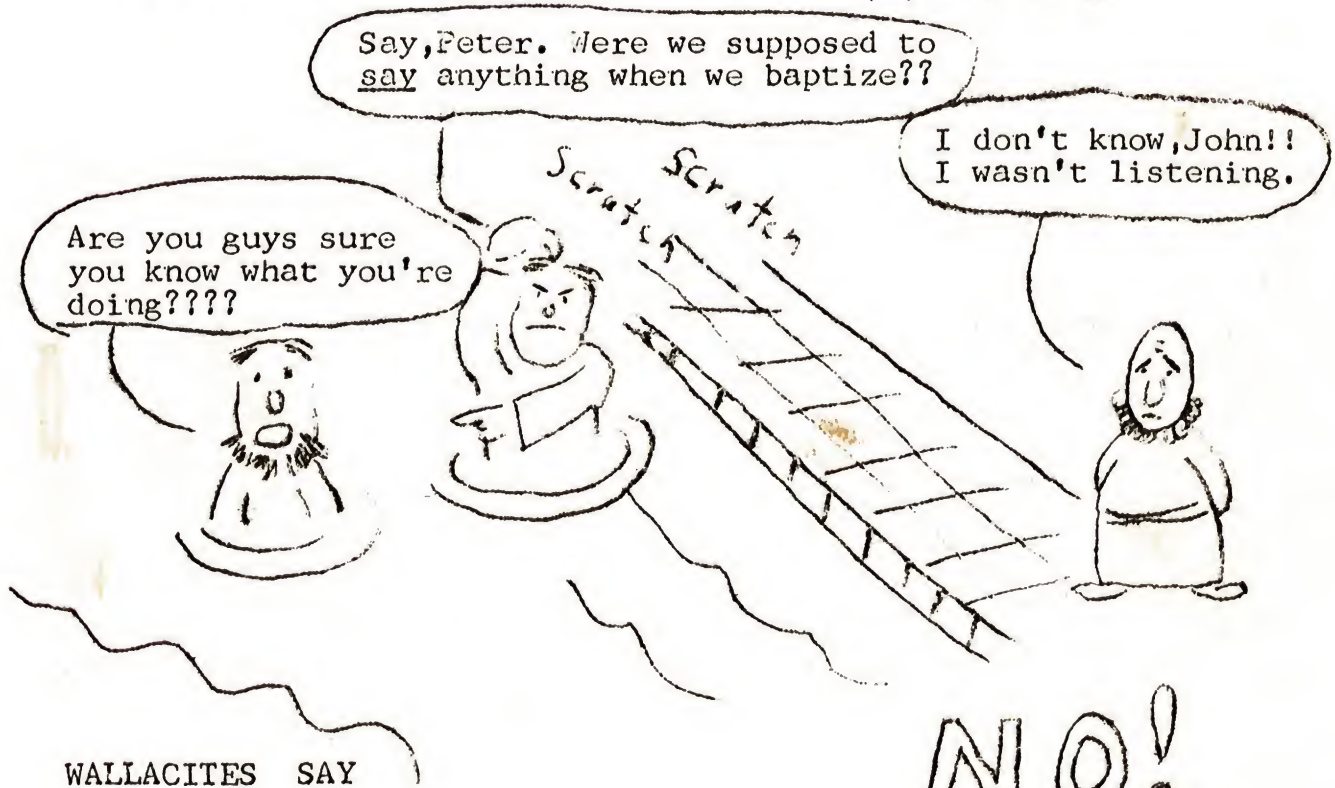


***Is There a Spoken Formula in
Water Baptism?
Doctrine of God —
Baptismal Formula***

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IS THERE A SPOKEN FORMULA in WATER BAPTISM?



Church History,
Sound Literal Interpretation,
Greek Grammars and Lexicons,
The New Testament,
and Consistency

ALL SAY

NO!
YES!

INTRODUCTION

For over half a century the Oneness Pentecostal Church has been insisting that the original, apostolic formula in water baptism was "in the name of Jesus" and that in order for baptism to be completely Biblical the name of Jesus had to be audibly invoked over the candidate during this baptism. We have asserted constantly that this was the original formula which was changed by the Roman Catholic Church sometime during the first three centuries of church history.

Naturally this message has not been received with open arms in all circles. Every sort of ingenious theory under the sun has been invented by our opponents in a frantic effort to evade the obvious implications of such a message. Up to 1950 there was no serious objection to baptism in Jesus' name. One wishing to see what these objections are is directed to John Patterson's excellent little booklet entitled "The Real Truth about Baptism in Jesus' Name." (available from Pent. Publ. House 8855 Dunn Road, Hazelwood, Mo.) Upon reading this book one is impressed at the ease with which Patterson is able to answer these objections some of which are extremely weak.

The following is a list of other objections to baptism in the name of Jesus from my own God in Christ Jesus:

1. It's not what you say that's important. It's the Attitude you do it in.
2. Baptism in Jesus' name was for the Jews only.
3. There are different Greek prepositions in Matt. 28:19 and Acts 2:38. (see further on in this book)
4. I'd rather do what Jesus said than what the apostles said.

But none of these objections seemed to be adequate. Oneness of the Godhead preachers were constantly exploding these theories to the horror and consternation of their advocates. Finally in desperation a frantic, drowning opponent grabbed for a straw. "If we can't offset the Oneness people's contention that the formula 'in Jesus' name' is the Biblical one, then let's do away with the formula all together." This is much like the dog who wouldn't eat the hay and wouldn't let the cow have any either. These preachers began to suggest that the expression "in the name" is figurative and should be taken in the sense of "in the authority of" Christ or something similar.

The first recorded use of this theory (in public discussion) was in 1951 by G.K. Wallace of the Church of Christ. In debating Rev. Vaughn of the UPC (at that time) he challenged Vaughn to produce a Scripture in the Bible where it says to say anything when

you baptize. This debate is the only one in print by the Church of Christ with one of our ministers on this subject where the entire text has been printed. In this debate one of the most experienced seasoned debaters in the Church of Christ met Rev. Vaughn who had just graduated from Bible College and had no experience whatever in debating. Bro. Vaughn told me personally that he had thought the debate would be with the local pastor and did not realize that he would have to meet a man of Wallace's experience nor did he realize the debate had been printed. (He also told me that he believed that some of the text on both speeches had been cut back and edited.

Wallace did not say at the time where he received this startling revelation, but a later Church of Christ minister let the cat out of the bag. During a debate in Mississippi he quoted from Hastings's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church as a source of the theory that there is no formula. Thus in doing so he betrayed the true source of such a doctrine. Most of the contributors to Hastings dictionary were also busy saying that not only was there no baptismal formula, but also no virgin birth, no deity of Christ, no inerrancy, no verbal inspiration in the Bible, no second coming, etc. The very source of this theory should make people wary of it.

(note 1: Actually the theory is somewhat older than Hastings Dictionary (1916) It originated among German critics such as H.A. Meyer. These critics were trying to read the theory of evolution into the New Testament and objected to the existence of a baptismal formula because they felt that something this developed could not be a part of the "simple non-doctrinal religion of Jesus." Conservative German scholars such as J.P. Lange and and H. Olshausen objected to the "no formula theory" as soon as it was introduced. Lange on p. 558 in his commentary on Matt. says, "We must dissent from Meyer..." when he propounds this theory. We agree.)

It is of interest to note how Carl Brumback parrots Church of Christ debaters in his God in Three Persons (Cleveland, Tenn: Pathway Press, 1959) but declines to give any footnotes. Yet pp. 151, 152 clearly echo if not almost directly quote the Wallace-Vaughn debate.

In 1963 I fully answered the "no formula" theory to the satisfaction of any honest hearted person in my God in Christ Jesus. Yet since the doctrine continues to spring up in various quarters I have decided to publish an extension of my answers in the God-head booklet as a service to the Church of Christ Jesus everywhere.

In 1968 a minister in California circulated a paper propounding the no formula theory. He challenged all United Pentecostal ministers to interact with him on this. I forthwith published this pamphlet. I sent minister Dunn (which was his name) a copy and asked him to refute it as he had indicated he wanted to do. In 4 years or more I have not so much as received a post card from him.

FIVE SMOOTH STONES

Like David of old I come not with Saul's armor but in the name of the Lord with five smooth stones. Any one of the five would be more than sufficient to forever silence this pseudo-giant which is challenging the armies of the living God. I list five reasons for not believing the "no formula" as follows. Before I begin I wish to say that I regret that the opposition has taken the desperate action of throwing out the formula all together just because they were unable to prove "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost" is a Biblical formula. (Note Brumback's admission on p.151 that all previous attempts to answer the Oneness position were inadequate) My reasons are listed as follows:

1. THE INTERPRETATION IS TOO UNSOUND TO HAVE OCCURRED TO ANYONE FOR ALMOST 1900 YEARS OF CHURCH HISTORY. And we do not think it would have occurred to anyone had not the United Pentecostal Church so effectively silenced all other man-made evasions to being baptized in Jesus' name.

No one in all of church history up to 1850 who actually believed in literal baptism in water ever doubted that the words "in the name" in Acts and Matthew were referring to a formula to be spoken in baptism. The only such formula mentioned in the Apostolic Fathers and for most of the second century was not the Trinitarian formula but one which actually contained the name of Jesus.

(Note 2: The "apostolic fathers" were leaders of the church who lived early enough to have known one or more apostles. I do not include the Didache in this group since Dr. Grant, our nation's foremost authority on the subject has stated that since there are so many undateable elements in this work that it is valueless in giving any information on the early second century forms of worship. (see Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Supplementary vol.1. Article on Didache) We are citing from these early leaders partly because our opponents have said that our formula has no support from church history.)

The Shepherd of Hermas, written about 140 AD speaks in two places of "those upon whom the name of the Lord was called."

(Note 3: Lightfoot-Harmer. The Apostolic Fathers. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965. Vision 3:7 and Sim. 8:6. On the translation of the second passage see Bauer's Lexicon under epikaleo. I have also checked these passages wherever possible from the Greek text of Kirrsop-Lake.)

Hermas further states that "no one shall enter the kingdom of God except he receive the name of the Son of God." (note 4: Op.cit. Sim. 9:12.) When Hermas inquired about what this meant he was told that a man received this name when he is sealed at water baptism. (note 5: opcit. Sim 9:12)

In about 165 AD Justin Martyr described a typical Christian baptism to the emperor in chapter 61 of his first apology. He states that "there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again the name of God the Father and Lord...and Jesus Christ... and the Holy Spirit." Elsewhere Justin tells us that he realizes that "Father, Son and Christ" are not names but titles. He says that "Jesus" is the true name of God. (note 6: See chapter VI in his second apology and also "Dialogue with Trypho", chapter 75) He **also says that** to become a disciple one must be illuminated in the name of Christ. (7: By "illuminated" Justin meant "baptized". see chapter 62, Apol. I, "Dialogue with Trypho" chapter xxxix) Evidently Justin interprets "in the name" to mean that something audible is actually said.

In Justin we first note additions being made to the original formula of the book of Acts (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:4-6). In chapters 62-65 he perhaps betrays the origin of this addition. He admits that in their services they were accustomed to beginning and ending their service with the trinitarian doxology to "the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." Evidently it was felt that a few extra words would decorate the baptismal service and make it more impressive.

A little study in any source giving background information on Justin will reveal ~~that~~ that this man was very much mixed up in philosophy and was using it to explain the primitive gospel message. (note 8: see the first 8 chapters of "Dialogue".) He is the first person in church history who begins to preach a distinction between the Father and the Son though it is usually acknowledged that he thinks the Son and Spirit are the same. He does this by identifying the Son with the Logos of Greek philosophy instead of explaining John 1:1-18 from the Old Testament. Thus we can begin to see the traditions of men replacing the commandments of God. (note 9: "logos" is the Greek word for "word" in John 1)

In about 170 Irenaeus writes, "We are made clean by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord." (note 10: Vol. I of Antenice Fathers, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 574) Whatever he means by this it is clear that he too interpreted "in the name" as directions for an audible formula.

The first datable reference to the standard Trinitarian formula was in 215AD by Tertullian who is also the first one to use the word "Trinity". (note 11: See chapter VI of his treatise on baptism on Vol. 3 of Antenice Fathers. Theophilus is often thought to be the first one to use this word but the word he used is "Triad" and his "Triad" is not three persons but God, His power and His Wisdom. See vol II ANF, p. 101.)

The fact that Tertullian was an inovator is clearly see by his complaint in chapter two of his treatise on the Trinity. He bemoaned the fact that the common people whom he says make up most of the church were contantly accusing him of preaching two gods when they heard his brand of Trinitarianism in 250AD. He too was

laughed at by the laity who knew better. (note 12: Anne Fremantle. Treasury of Early Christianity. NY: Mentor, 1953, pp. 291, 292 shows that Origin in the third century had a similar problem. He says, "Our brothers are shocked by the affirmation that there are two Gods, the subject should be treated with care...." We agree!!!)

In 250 AD the trinitarian baptismal formula still hadn't become universal except around ROME!!!! In volume 5 of the Antenice Fathers we find an anonymous treatise on baptism of heretics. The editors claim that this man was a bishop who would know a good deal about church customs of the day. This bishop claims that heretics should not be rebaptized providing they had been previously baptized in Jesus' name. Later on in the book he interprets this to mean the "name of Jesus invoked upon any man be baptism might afford to him who should be baptized no slight advantage..." (p. 674)

It was not until 692 that the Roman church was strong enough to attempt to enforce the Trinitarian baptismal formula on everybody by ruling from an ecumenical council. (note 13: Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers. Series 2, vol. 14, pp. 579, 610) Despite the fact that the council of Trullo forbade any but Trinitarian baptism, we find Nicolas the first defending baptism in Jesus' name in the ninth century in his Responsa ad Bulgarorum. (Note 14: See article on "Baptism" in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, NY: Scribners, 1906.)

In all of this controversy about formulas there were complaints in the church fathers about every kind of formula imaginable but NEVER was there any mention of a group of people who didn't have a formula at all. The world had to wait 19 centuries for G.K. Wallace and the modernists for this.

Possibilities for a Cambell-Wallace Debate

Actually the forerunner of the modern denomination called the "Church of Christ" himself would have been shocked to hear one of his successors making such a statement. Alexander Cambell repeatedly debated the proposition that the only form of baptism that a person could consider Christian was "into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." which he understood to be a spoken formula.

He recognized the formula based on the words "in the name" as meaning an audible formula and being "one of the essentials of baptism". He insisted on this even to the point of insisting that the speaker say "into" and not "in". (note 15: Robert Richardson. Memoirs of A. Cambell. vol 2. St. Louis: 1926, p. 629 and A. Cambell. Christian System. St. Louis: Christian Publ. Co., 1853, p. 202.)

In the Cambell-Rice debate he stated that one of the essentials of baptism was "the Divine formula of words 'into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit!'" (note 16: Cambell-Rice Debate. Lexington, Zen.: 1844, p. 148.)

Cambell who claimed on should be extremely careful of the words used in the formula would have been shocked to hear semi-professional, semi-modernist debater Wallace state that it doesn't make any difference what you say. (note 17: A. Cambell. Baptism. St. Louis: Christian Publ., 1882, p. 148. note 18: Wallace-Vaughn Debate, Okla. City: Telegraph Books, 1952. "I never did say that (Matt. 28:19) was a formula. There is no baptismal formula. None at all!" p. 115. "They can't find one tonight, tomorrow night, in a thousand years where God set a formula to say over a man." "You can baptize a man into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and call neither name nor title." p. 116. "God didn't bind any special word to be said over a man." p. 155 "What I say is my privilege." p. 129

Apparently Cambell, unlike Wallace, sometimes felt a little uneasy about the Scriptural backing his formula had. Notice the following statement:

How comes it to pass, though once and only once, it is commanded that the nations who believed on him should be immersed into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and though we read of no person being immersed in this way, how comes it to pass that all sects use these words without a scruple and baptize...in this name...Is one commandment, UNSUPPORTED BY A SINGLE PRECEDENT, SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY THIS PRACTICE??????? (Cambell thinks somehow that it is)...(Cambell however can only find one answer to his question)... "I cannot, upon any other principle that that tyrant custom, who gives no account of his doings has so decreed."

(Cambell was contrasting this with preachers refusing to immerse for the remission of sins when there were many passages teaching this. Note 19: A. Cambell. Christ. System. pp. 225ff. See also Millennial Harbinger. vol. 1862, p. 454, vol. 1864 mp. 5)

Yet Cambell used this formula and contended for it (something Wallace cannot do) all his life. (Note 20: Richardson, op. cit. vol. I p. 373, vol. II, pp. 289, 429.) It is a shame we could not summon Mr. Cambell from the great beyond and arrange a Cambell-Wallace debate on whether the Lord gave directions to say anything or not. Cambell was sure right down to the last that He had! I personally would pick Cambell as the winner!

Actually the truth of the matter is that even Wallace himself is unconvinced by his own reasoning which says there is no baptismal formula and that you can baptize into the name of the Father, etc. without uttering a word. Five years after the debate with Vaughn, Wallace printed out a series of lectures on Denominational Dogmas in which he talks from the other side of his mouth. I quote from one of these lectures as follows:

"Note the instructions about baptizing them in the name

of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. If it does not make a difference about a name would you want to be baptized in just any name? Suppose I take you out there and say, 'I baptize you in the name of Benito Mussolini....' The Bible says we are to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

(note 21:G.K.Wallace,Lectures on Denominational Dogma, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co.,1956.p.117.)

According to Wallace's own admission the way to baptize someone in the name of Mussolini would be to actually say these words: "I baptize you in the name of Benito Mussolini!" Pray tell how else could you do it! The only other way I could think of would be to get out there and have it written on a sign! Actually Wallace knows full well that if he baptized them "in any name at all" he would actually verbally say the name! If he baptizes with a piece of tape over his mouth you couldn't tell his baptism into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from the baptism "into the name of Jack Sprat"!!!!

Actually it is extremely strange that Wallace uses a spoken formula. This is very strange language coming from a church which claims to "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent," and do nothing in worship without specific NT authority. Where would Wallace get the authority for the formula he uses if according to his own words on page 131 of the W-V debate Christ never set a formula. He is then going beyond the instructions Christ set down for baptizing and has absolutely no NT authority.

Of course a Cambell-Wallace debate is hardly feasible, but one could not help wonder what Cambell would say when Wallace called him a catholic priest and a Jewish exorcist because he felt that a spoken formula was essential to a correct Christian baptism. (cf pp.48,114,130 of the W-V debate) Probably he would not have taken it in the same spirit as Vaughn does. It was hardly respectful for him to refer to Vaughn in this way much less the harbinger of his own "denomination"!

STONE #2: THE NO FORMULA THEORY IS BASED ON AN INCONSISTENT USE OF A FAULTY METHOD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

The entire existence of the no-formula theory depends on the abandonment of the most usual meaning of the word "name" (always coming first in Lexicons and dictionaries) in favor of a figurative meaning something like "authority" or "person". We have already seen that the usual, literal meaning was so imbedded in people's minds that it was not until the mid 19th century that anyone ever questioned the obvious, literal meaning of this phrase.

We would ask Wallace and all his cousins what their motive is in abandoning the most usual, obvious interpretation held so universally for nearly 1900 years. The obvious answer is that by doing so they can very neatly evade one of God's basic commandments. It is a rather unworthy motive to be sure. Of course the possibility of making at least an adequate showing in a debate is also a powerful motive.

It has long been the practice of false cults to look for hidden spiritual meanings. The Wallacites have no patent on ignoring the literal words of the Scripture and going off gayly looking for figurative meanings. This was the main methods of most Roman Catholic scholars during the middle ages. It is used by Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science and others.

If this method of spiritualizing the sacraments is followed to its logical conclusion it will lead to spiritual baptism and to a spiritual keeping of the Lord's supper. This is exactly what what the 19th century Quakers and members of the Salvation Army came up with. They beckon even now to those who would use Wallace's methods and say, "Come on brother you're almost with us." If followed consistently, this method leads to a spiritual 2nd coming, spiritual marriage, a figurative hell and heaven, in fact everything you believe will be figurative and symbolical.

According to A.H. Strong General Booth said, "Every time they (the Salvation Army Soldiers) take bread, (they) remember the broken body of the Lord, and every time they wash the body they remind themselves of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ and of the indwelling Spirit." (Note 22: A.H. Strong. Systematic Theology. Philadelphia: Judson, 1907, vol. III, p. 93.)

Thus one can see the pitfalls of not taking the Bible at face value. It means what it says, and says what it means. It is to be taken literally where possible and as literal as possible. Dwight Pentecost in his Things to Come quotes from a number of textbooks in hermeneutics to illustrate what we have said. We include a few of these as follows:

"Once we start with the rule that whole passages say one thing and mean another, the reader is delivered bound hand and foot to the caprice of the interpreter."^u

(notes 23, 24: Dwight Pentecost. Things to Come. Grand Rapids: Dunham, 1964, p. 35)

"The words of Scripture must be taken in their common meaning unless such meaning is shown to be inconsistent with other words in the sentence, with the argument or context or with other parts of scripture."^u

(note 25: Ibid. p. 40)

"The literal or most usual meaning of a word, if consistent should be preferred to a figurative or less usual signification."

(Pentecost, p.40)

Thus the burden of proof rests on the Wallacites who have abandoned the usual, common, literal meaning of "name" to show why this usual, common, literal meaning accepted by the church for 1900 years must be abandoned. This, of course, that are unable to do.

In this kind of system of interpretation so crucial to the no-formula theory "what the original writer wanted to say is ignored. What the interpreter (the Wallacites) wants to say becomes the only important factor." This kind of interpretation, says Dr. Berkely Michelson, "is an example of what not to do." And we agree! (Note 26; Berkely Michelson. Interpreting the Bible. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963. pp.28,29)

We agree wholeheartedly with the authors of Beginning of Christianity who say, "Anyone who said he was baptized in Jesus' name knew full well that someone had taken him out into the water and said, 'I baptize you in the name of Jesus' or something similar' (note 27; Foakes Jackson and Kirrsopp Lake, ed. The Beginnings of Christ. vol.IV. Acts 2:38, in loco.) Alexander Cambell knew it and framed his propositions on this assumption each time he debated on the subject of baptism. G.W. Wallace and his cousins also undoubtedly know it.

In all the passages in the New Testament which contain the phrase in the name of Jesus (or "my name", referring to Jesus) the literal meaning is entirely permissible. In nearly all, if not all the literal speaking of the name is required. Notice the following classes of passages:

1. "receiving or welcoming someone" Mark.9:37; Lk 9:48, Matt.18:5.
In Acts 9:26-29 when the disciples heard that Paul was bold in speaking and teaching about the name of Jesus they received him into their fellowship. It was the mentioning of the name of Jesus which caused him to be accepted. Matt.18:5 thus means that if a little child testifies and is not afraid to mention the name of Jesus in his testimony we are to accept him as a member of the community providing of course he continues to walk in all the light.
2. "Come in Jesus' name" Matt 24:5; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8 says that many false prophets will come in Christ's name. These false prophets as we all know are very bold to speak the name of Jesus audibly. Here again the name is spoken. A false prophet would have absolutely no influence whatsoever in the church unless he very frequently used the name of Jesus!!!

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3. Casting out of Demons. Mk. 9:38, 39, Lk. 9:49; Mk. 16:17; Luke 10:17.
We know from passages such as Acts 16:18, 19:13 that the name of Jesus was always audibly invoked when demons were cast out. There would be no other possible way to do it!!! Here again the phrase "in the name of Jesus" absolutely demands the speaking of a literal name.
4. Give a cup of water in a name (Mk. 9:41 "Whosoever gives you a drink of water in a name (Nestle's Greek text) because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward." Here again the drink is given in response to a verbal mentioning of name of Jesus. Someone said, "Give me a drink. I am a follower of Jesus." This would require the give to respond, "Because you are a follower of Jesus, I will give you a drink." Thus the name of Jesus would be spoken a great deal. In obedience to Eph. 5:20 the receiver would have to say, "Thank you, Jesus!" Again the name would be actually spoken frequently during this action.
5. Preaching, exhorting, teaching in the name of Jesus. Lk. 24:47; II Thes. 3:6; Acts 4:18. Obviously this could not possibly be done without the actual speaking of the name of Jesus during the action.. (cf. also Acts 5:28, 40)
6. Prayer in the name of Jesus. John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26, 17:18. No prayer could possibly be made without the actual use of the name of Jesus during the act of praying.
7. Healing in the name of Jesus. Acts 3:6. The name was actually audibly spoken in the healings in Acts. Acts 4:7, 10, 12 serve to accentuate this. They are asked what name they used. There could be only one reply.
8. Being bold in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:27, 28) actually referred to Paul's actual speaking of the name during his early preaching. If he was afraid to speak the name during this action, he could hardly be said to have been bold in Jesus' name. Again the speaking of the name during the action is required.
9. Thanksgiving and glorifying God. Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17; I Pet. 4:16. (cf. Greek text) These scriptures teach that the giving of thanks is not possible without the mentioning of Jesus' name.
10. Gathered together in my name (Matt. 18:20; I Cor. 5:4) No Christian group would ever gather without mentioning audibly the name of Jesus!
11. Phil. 2:10 "At the mention of the name of Jesus every knee shall bow..."

Thus in all these instances which represent every occasion that the phrase "in the name of Jesus" is used in the Bible there

was an audible speaking of the name during the action. Opponents of baptism in Jesus' name ask us to believe that when a person is baptized in Jesus' name there is no speaking of the name! When a person preaches, teaches, heals, casts out demons, gives thanks, gathers together in the name of Jesus the name is spoken. But when a person baptizes in Jesus' name, according to our opponents, we have the great exception!

STONE 3: IT MAKES CHRISTIAN BAPTISM INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM PAGAN AND JEWISH RIGHTS.

Roman Catholic and World Council of Churches Baptism

There were all sorts of mystery religions in NT days (and now) who immersed. Immersions were extremely common in Paul's day. Beware of imitations. You can always tell the original from the counterfeit by reading the label on the package. God has a label on His kind of baptism. It is the spoken words, "in the name of Jesus". There is clearly something wrong with a man's doctrine who despises the spoken identification of the name of Jesus. Jesus said if you were ashamed of Him now, he would be ashamed of you in the age to come.

According to a recent series of articles in Life Magazine the Roman Catholic Church recognizes anyone to be a Catholic who has been baptized with the Trinitarian formula. According to an Associated Press dispatch the World Council of Churches accepted in 1961 the requirement of belief in the Trinity for membership. The head of the Russian Orthodox church applauded this and stated at the convention that "acceptance of the new basis, with its trinitarian formula...corresponds exactly with the common faith which we have here together..." (note 28: Quoted by D.F. Gray in April, 1962 issue of Apostolic Power Magazine.)

In the Winter of 1969 a Roman Catholic priest addressed a group of protestants in Stockton, California. During this session this priest admitted that the Roman Catholic Church changed the original baptismal formula from "in the name of Jesus" to the longer trinitarian variety. The reason for this was to help the Catholic Church get across the doctrine of the Trinity. This priest also personally confided in his audience that he felt that his church would persecute the Oneness Pentecostal people during the great tribulation for their stand on these issues. We withheld the name of this priest for his protection. The entire service was recorded on tape.

All of these facts show that the one point of doctrine which makes the true church stand out against Rome and the World Council of Churches is the Oneness of the Godhead and its accompanying baptismal formula.

The Baptism of John and Jewish Washings

If the expression "in the name" is only a statement of the authority of the baptisms or is a mere statement that such baptisms were Christian, we would think that, at least once, a similar expression would have been used with the baptism of John or the Jewish washings. John baptized "in the authority of Jesus"; his whole ministry was based on the coming of the messiah. Certainly he did not baptize in his own authority!

There are about three times as many references to baptism in the gospels (many of which are specific instances) as there are in the book of Acts, yet in not one instance do we hear of John baptizing "in the name" of anyone. Didn't he have any authority for his baptizing??? "In the name" is used only of baptism after Pentecost.)*

If what our opponents say is true, there is no difference between John's baptisms and apostolic baptism. Why then are we told about the disciples at Ephesus being re-baptized? Why was there any need for such a baptism???

1. In both cases the people were immersed in water "in the authority of Jesus" (certainly not in John's own authority)
2. In both cases they were required to believe on Christ before receiving this baptism. ("saying unto them that they should believe on Him that should come after him that is on Christ Jesus")(Acts 19:4)

If the expression in question is not a spoken formula, why are we repeatedly told that the apostles baptized in Jesus' name. We are never told they did anything else like this (except in explanation to unbelievers) Yet in baptism we are told over and over again that they baptized "in the name of Jesus". Why? Simply to establish in the mouth of two or three witnesses what formula the NT church used. In what other apostolic ordinance was this style ever used?

It would have been highly superfluous to keep pointing out that the apostles baptized in the authority of Jesus. Are we to believe that the apostles of our Lord Jesus would have baptized in any other authority? Of course not!! The implication is so strong in whose authority they were baptizing that no such statement would have been necessary (at least for the benefit of believers).

And in all the dozens of washings under the law why are we never told that any of them were done in the name of Jehovah?? Obviously because none of them contained an audible formula. Such questions pose unescapable problems for the no-formula theory. In fact we are never told anything under the law was done in the name of Jehovah except blessing. It would have been foolish for anyone to say the sacrifices, etc. were done in Jehovah's authority. (note 29: See Deut. 10:8. It is of interest that the only occurrence

of "in the name" in the Pentateuch ^{in a liturgical sense} is obviously to be carried out vocally according to Numbers 6:24-27.

The other uses in the Old Testament of the expression "in the name" also bear this out. These passages are presented in the Brown, Driver Briggs, Lexicon (pp.1027,1028) and Lisowsky's Hand-Konkordanz zum Hebräischen alten Testament (pp.1450-1452) and the Koehler-Baumgartner Lexicon (pp.983,984).

According to Brown Driver Briggs the Hebrew expression b'shēm Yahweh (in the name of Jehovah) means "call with, i.e. use the name of Jehovah in worship." (p.983) The Koehler-Baumgartner Lexicon concurs with this. According to Koehler-Baumgartner b'shēm Yahweh means "calling the name=in the name of" (p.983) "call by mentioning the name Jehovah" (p.984) The following passages are listed from the Old Testament which contain the expression "in the name of someone":

1. Speak, prophecy "in the name of Jehovah". Ex. 5:23; Jer. 14:14, 15. This is a very frequent use of this expression. All the prophets prefaced their oracles with the expression "thus saith Jehovah". Prophecy in the name of Jehovah was utterly impossible without audibly mentioning the name. It was inseparable from the act.
2. Another class of passages blessing and cursing "in the name of Jehovah." Here again actually mentioning the name is inseparable from the act. There are no oaths in the OT which do not contain the name of Jehovah! (II Sam 6:18; II Kings 2:24)
3. Another group speaks of swearing "in the name of Jehovah" (I Sam. 20:42) Here again no oath without the audible mentioning of Jehovah's name would be worth the effort to say it.
4. Asking "in the name" of someone. (I Sam. 25:9)
The following verses show that David's name was actually audibly used (cf. v.10)
5. Letters sent in Ahab's name would actually have to contain his name (I Kings 21:8)

The above includes a cross section of all of the uses of the expression "in the name" in the Old Testament. We may see from these examples that it was never the style of the Bible to use the words "in the name" in a figurative sense towards Divine ordinances. Such usage is foreign to the entire Bible.

STONE 4: THE MOST UP TO DATE GREEK DICTIONARIES AND GRAMMARS STATE THAT THE GREEK WORDS FOR "IN THE NAME" IN ACTS 2:38; 8:16 and 10:48 ARE REFERRING TO A FORMULA.

Back at the turn of the century some scholars began to question that there was a formula in baptism. Many modernists were doubting almost every doctrine that the church had ever put forward. The fact that none of these doubts have survived far beyond the turn of the century is mute testimony to their unsoundness. There are no living modern scholars today who doubt the existence of a formula in water baptism. This doctrine has fared much better than the deity of Christ or the virgin birth.

The Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church reflected some of this doubt. In the article on baptism the author explains the no-formula theory and generally decided against it. Later on in the 20th century when the Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics came out not only was there no mention made of the no-formula theory but the author of the article on baptism stated that in NT baptism "the latter sealed...the candidate by invoking the fair name of Jesus over his head." (note 30: see article on "baptism") It is interesting to note that many of the contributors to Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible at the time of its writing were under question for their modernistic tendencies.

[This doubt is also reflected in Thayer's Lexicon. (note 31: Thayer may not have meant that no formula was used in baptism since on p.94 he says baptism in the name of Christ means "to profess the name of one whose follower we become.") However, since Thayer's Lexicon came out in 1888, many important archeological finds have been unearthed shedding much light on the Greek language as it was spoken in the time of our Lord. So that Dr. Collet of the University of Chicago says that many phrases which were "hitherto impossible" now became common. Because of these findings and much research in Greek propositions, the no-formula theory has been challenged, and today I do not know of a single living Greek scholar of professional quality who advocates this position.]

(Note: The favorite passage of no-formula advocates is on p.447 of Thayer's Lexicon. This passage refers the reader to p.390 of Thayer's edition of Winer's Greek Grammar. Here Thayer expresses awareness that he really was not quite sure about his interpretation. He says here "Even in the most recent Lexicons the significance of this proposition have been unwarrantably multiplied or its real significations incorrectly applied to NT passages. The interpretations which have been given to the phrase "in the name of someone" in particular...")

One of the newest and best lexicons ever put out was written by Dr. Walter Bauer and translated by Arndt and Gingrich with the cooperation of the best scholarship of Europe and America. It is gradually replacing Thayer's lexicon in schools and colleges. It has received special praise in the reviews because of its excellent treatment of prepositions. One of its reviewers has stated that it makes all other lexicons obsolete.

On commenting on the meaning of the Greek phrase translated "in the name" in Acts 2:38 Bauer's Lexicon says that this expression means to "be baptized or have oneself baptized while naming the name of Jesus Christ." (note 32; Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT. Revised and translated by Arndt and Gingrich, Chic: Univ. of Chicago, 1957, p. 576) This lexicon claims that in the "great majority of cases en onomati ("in the name") of God or Jesus means 'with the mention of the name, while naming or calling on the name.'" (Note 34; ibid., p. 575) On the other hand the same work on commenting on Matt. 28:19 where the original Greek is slightly different from the Acts passages, (eis to onoma="in the name" in Matt. 28:19) says that eis to onoma in Matt. 28:19 means "the one who is baptized becomes the possession of and comes under the protection of the one whose name he bears; he is under the control of the effective power of the name and the One who bears the name..." Bauer says further, "An additional factor, to a degree, may be the sense... 'with the mention of the name.'" (note 34; ibid., p. 575)

(Some may object that this line of thinking followed by Bauer is wrong because eis and en were interchangeable in Nt Greek. However, the two standard Grammars of the NT Greek language both state that the book of Matt. is a definite exception to this rule. See Blass-DeBrunner-Funk. Grammar, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 110. Nigel Turner, Grammar, London: T&T Clark, 1963, p. 225.)

This is exactly opposite of what most people have been affirming!! According to Bauer, the standard work in NT Greek lexicons, Acts 2:38 is the formula and Matt. 28:19 is a general statement of the relationship of the one who is baptized to God.

One of the latest and most exhaustive Theological Greek lexicons is Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Albrecht Oepke says in this work that the "distinctive feature of Christian baptism is that it is administered eis to onoma Christou ("in the name of Christ")... The name of Christ is pronounced, invoked, or confessed by the one who baptizes..." (note 35; Albrecht Oepke, "baptizo" in Theological Dictionary of the NT, ed. by G. Kittel and translated by G. Bromley, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963, vol. 1, p. 539.)

Baker Book House has recently updated the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. It was revised by printing out two supplementary volumes authored by leading fundamentalist scholars. The saw: no need to change the remarks of the old article on the baptismal formula. In this article Professor Feine said, "The Greek phrase en to onomati ("in the name" in Acts 2:38) means the acts of baptism takes place with the utterance of the name of Jesus." On the other hand eis to onoma ("in the name" in Matt. 28:19) means that the person baptized enters into the relation of belonging to Christ or of being his property." (note 36; Feine, "Baptism" in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Rel. Knowledge, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1951, vol 1, p. 436.)

The most recent grammar of the Greek NT was written by Nigel Turner. He is by no means committed to the no-formula theory. He says that "we have in the baptismal formula in Acts 19:5,8:16 eis as well as "en to onomati." (note 37: Nigel Turner, Grammar of the NT Greek, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1953, p. 255.)

[One of the most outstanding commentaries on the Greek text of Acts was written by F.F. Bruce as outstanding fundamentalist scholar. In commenting on Acts 2:38 he states that "en ("in") is to be understood instrumentally; the name of Jesus Christ is an 'accompanying circumstance' of the baptism... the baptizer named it over the person baptized." (note 38: F.F. Bruce, Acts, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952, in loco.)

Thus we see that the really up to date standard sources of the Greek language all consent with one voice and one accord in the words of Acts referring to a spoken formula in water baptism. There has only been one author of any note in the last 50 years who has had anything favorable to say towards the theory that there might not have been a formula in the NT baptisms.

In the Wallace-Vaughn debate G.K. Wallace lays great stress on Col. 3:17 where we are directed to do everything in deed or in word in Jesus' name. He takes great delight in asking Vaughn if in his carpentry trade he says "Jesus" everytime he pounds a nail. Note also the same method used by Carl Brumback in parrot fashion. (note 39: Wallace-Vaughn Debate, loc. cit., p. 50, 51. Brumback, loc. cit. pp. 151, 152ff.)

This of course is much like saying that "pray without ceasing" in I Thes. 5 means we cannot go to work because we will have to stop praying. Note also that Vaughn and Brumback are not especially interested in quoting the remainder of Col. 3:17 which says, "giving thanks unto the God and Father by Him." We do not say the name of Jesus over every nail, but neither do we pray over every bite of food. One prayer is sufficient. Thus in Col. 3:17 while it is not necessary to say "thankyou Jesus" everytime we pound a nail each time we go to work we should say, "Thank you Jesus for this job." This, we think, satisfies the spirit of Col. 3:17.

Col. 3:17 teaches us that whatever we do we should use the name of Jesus in thanksgiving for every opportunity we have.

However if just for argument's sake we do assume that there is a figurative emphasis here on the word "name". This might even be seen in the original Greek of the passage where there is no definite article ('the') before "name". According to any standard grammar of the Greek language when the definite article is omitted the quality, character or figurative nature of the word is stressed rather than its definiteness or individuality. (note 40; the following grammars will substantiate this: Blass-DeBrunner-Funk, op. cit., p. 132; see Wescott, Hebrews (comment on en huiō in Heb.

1:1; Dana-Mantey, Grammar, NY: MacMillan, 1927, pp. 149-151.)

The fact that in every reference to baptism in Acts the word "name" always is accompanied by a definite article is clear proof that our author is trying to show us he means a definite, literal proper name is to be called! According to A.T. Robertson the prepositional phrases often do not have the definite article in Greek because they are considered definite enough without it. (note 41: A.T. Robertson, Grammar of the Greek NT in the Light of Historical Research, Nashville: Broadman, 1934, p. 791.) The fact that in baptismal references the article is always present is double proof that we are not to assign any figurative meanings to "name" in these passages. This is the Holy Spirit's index finger pointing to the first and most primary meaning in the Lexicon!!!

Thus we can see that even if verses as Col. 3:17 and Matt. 10:41 are conceded to have a figurative meaning of the word "name" there is really no parallel with the baptism passages. The baptism passages have the article on the word "name" while Col. 3:17 and Matt. 10:41 do not and therefore the figurative aspect may be stressed in these verses somewhat more than in the baptism passages. Yet even in these passages there is an audible mentioning of the "name". There could be no thanking a person unless his name were mentioned so people could tell who we were thanking!

STONE 5: THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS REFERRED TO AS THE "NATIONS UPON WHOM THE NAME OF THE LORD (i.e. Jesus, see Acts 9:5) IS CALLED.
(see Acts 15:17; James 2:7)

Note the reading of these verses:

Acts 15:17: "In order that the rest of men might seek the Lord and all the nations upon whom my name is called."

James 2:7 "Do they not blaspheme the good name which was called over you?"

(The tenses of the verbs "called" (perfect and aorist) show that this calling took place at one particular event somewhere in past time and the effects of this action continue into the future, (note 42 Blass-DeBrunner-Funk, op.cit. pp. 171, 175, 176.) The calling of the name in these verses was not looked upon as something which habitually occurred from day to day or from service to service such as blessings, benedictions, or simply the name "Christian". If this had been the case, the imperfect tense would have been used, (note 43: Ibid. p. 169)

The only NT possibility for the calling of a name at one particular event whose effects continue into the future is at the baptismal ceremony!!! Thus in the mouth of two or three witnesses we see that there was a formula in water baptism!

Recently the author submitted a Master's thesis to a large mid-western seminary noted for its work in Biblical languages. According to the examining committee an original contribution to knowledge was performed by the author in demonstrating conclusively that these passages were mistranslated in many of the English versions. (note 44; Ferguson, The Significance of Calling a Name over an Object in the Scriptures. An unpublished M.A. thesis at Wheaton College, 1965.) The verses are often translated "called by the name" instead of "upon whom the name is called."

The following are some of the verses which the thesis dealt with and demonstrated a mistranslation of the verses in most English versions:

1. Adoption. "Let my name (Jacob's) be named on them..." Gen. 48:16. Jacob adopts them as his own sons, and thus in this way they could become eligible for equal rights of inheritance with his own sons. Many commentators feel that the special adoption was necessary because Ephraim and Manasseh had an Egyptian mother.
2. Dedication. "This house (the temple) which I have built, thy name is called upon it" (II Chron. 6:33) If material buildings are audibly dedicated to God by having His name called over them, how much more ought the Lord's name be audibly invoked at the symbolic dedication of the NT temples of God in baptism?
3. Subjection and Ownership. "Lest I take it (Rabbah) and my name be called upon it..." II Sam. 12:28. The translation "called by my name" cannot be correct since there is no record of the city's name ever being changed. In deed years later it still retained this same name (Jer. 49:2). Evidently Joab's name would have been called upon the city to show that it was now under subjection to him.
4. Marriage. "seven women shall take hold of one man and say...let thy name be called upon us..." Isa. 4:1,2.
5. Blessing. "...on this wise ye shall bless the people saying, Jehovah (Note 45; Hebrew is "Jehovah") bless thee.... And they shall put my name on them, and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:24,27)

From this solemn ceremony of formal blessing on Israel is called "my people upon whom my name is called" Deut. 28:10. In the Old Covenant the name was put on the people en-masse, but in the New Covenant we have a more personal walk with God so each one of us has God's name put on us personally at water baptism. The Jewish church was adopted by God as a whole, but the members of Christ's church come one by one out of all nations and are born into the kingdom.

Where did the baptismal formula in Acts come from?

We have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that there was an audible formula in baptism which was practiced by the early church. Now we would ask this question: Where did they get this formula?? Are we to believe they made it up themselves? God forbid!!! If they made this much up, how can we be sure they didn't just make the whole thing up???

Actually everything the apostles did and taught in formal worship, they did at the specific command and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ. After His resurrection Acts 1:2 assured us that our Lord took special pains to give His apostles explicit instructions as to what they were to do. Jesus commanded; and the book of Acts is an accurate, historical description of how these commands were carried out.

The answer forever to the afore mentioned challenge to produce scripture where we are supposed to say anything at baptism is answered with the following verse?

"If any man take away from the words of this book, God shall take his part out of the book of life." Rev. 22:19

If we remove the correct baptismal formula, we are taking away from the Word of God and are thus in danger of having our names taken from the book of life.

THE NO-FORMULA THEORY CREATES MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT SOLVES.

[A favorite parable used by our friends is about the ambassador who does thing "in the name" of the U.S. without actually audibly calling that name.] Actually all binding legal documents such as treaties, etc. would be worthless without the actual name of our country. Moreover the ambassador could not possibly do any kind of business without at some point verbally mentioning the name "United States". Nor could anyone else conduct formal business without his actual full name! Imagine checks and deeds written out to fathers, sons, cousins, aunts, etc. with no proper names on them.

However, for argument's sake suppose the ambassador did anything (in his official capacity) in the name of one state only. These no-formula people would be the first to scream for his dismissal for playing favorites. Jesus is either the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost or when the apostles baptized in Jesus' name they disobeyed the Lord. It is unusual then, that these people cannot see that if baptism was to be performed only in the authority of the Son only, the apostle's disobeyed Matt. 28:19.

All our states share one common authority, but for anyone to call this common authority "the authority of Texas" would be a

dishonor to the other states. The reader will soon see that the only way out of this dilemma is to admit that Jesus is the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and that the apostles actually called this name when they baptized.

By way of summary to get out of their obligation to be baptized with this formula our friends have created the following problems with their no- formula theory:

- ✓1. They have borrowed a theory that was invented by German critics to apply the doctrine of evolution to the NT.
2. They have run rampant over 1800 years of church history.
- ✓3. They have inconsistently adopted a defective method of interpretation which if followed to its logical conclusion would do away with baptism all together.
4. They assumed the Lord did not give enough directions and left the apostles hanging in the air about what to say.
5. Without a formula or with an indefinite one they have no way of distinguishing to the public what they are doing. If they are really baptizing in Jesus Christ's name or authority, why are they ashamed to audibly acknowledge it in the ceremony???
6. If there is no formula they have no way of logically explaining why the words "in the name" are used with NT baptism and no other formal ordinance.
7. The no-formula people are forced to the ridiculous position of having to pit themselves against almost every standard, current piece of literature on the Greek language in print! Yet it is probably doubtful if one of these no-formula advocates has gone far past the first course in Greek if that far. Yet they stand alone in their attempts to evade God's word and persist in their unsound contentions.
8. Deprived of their use of Col. 3:17 they have absolutely no scriptural support for their case. The fact "in the name" means "in the authority of" (or specially emphasizes authority) only in baptisms is condemned with the simple criticism of Louis Berkhof: "There is no proof for it." (note 45 L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941, p. 524.)
- ✓9. The no-formula theory goes against scriptures which say the name of the Lord was called over Christians in one particular event in past time (Acts 15:17; James 2:7).

10. Any theory which would drive a coach and four horses through so much evidence must have quite a powerful motivation. Yet no motive can be given except that errant human nature disdains to acknowledge its mistakes and ever balks at God's simple commands.

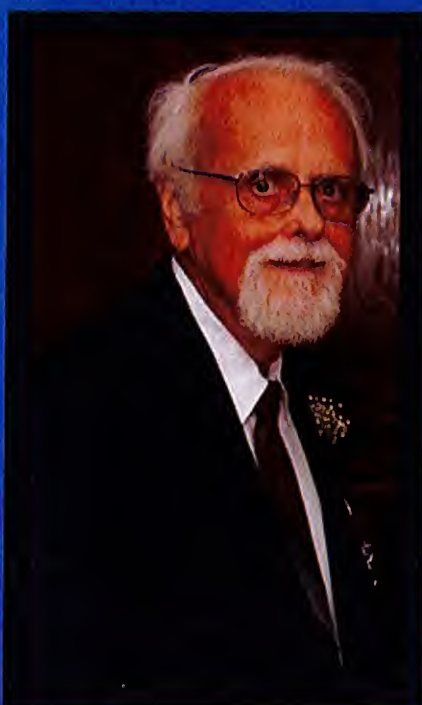
We close this discussion of the no-formula theory with the words of the German conservative scholar Olshausen who aptly remarks that this theory "would never have been suggested at all had other portions of the NT scripture shown that the disciples employed these words (i.e. the Trinitarian formula of the Roman catholic church so dearly caressed by some people) in baptism." (note 46: H. Olshausen, NT Commentary, vol. III, NY: 1859, p. 143. We might add that it would never have been suggested except at last resort in face of unanswerable evidence presented by the Oneness Pentecostal Church that the Roman Catholic formula is unscriptural. What we have just answered was a theory taken from way down in the bottom of the barrel.

The author of this booklet challenges any advocate of the no-formula theory to step forward and explain how he can solve at least ten problems created by a theory intending to solve one problem, i.e. how to get out of being baptized in Jesus' name.

Paul James Ferguson, PhD



Paul James Ferguson PhD (June 20, 1938 – March 18, 2018), received an MA (Greek & Hebrew) and an MDiv from Wheaton College and a PhD (Theology) from Chicago Theological Seminary. His master's thesis on a translation problem in Greek and Hebrew was acclaimed by the examining committee as an original contribution to knowledge in the field of Bible translation.



In the 1960s, Dr. Ferguson served as a layman in the United Pentecostal Church International and professor of Biology and other subjects at Western Apostolic Bible College (now Christian Life College, Stockton, CA). He participated in a number of public and written debates on subjects such as: the Godhead, Spiritual Gifts, and the Baptismal Formula. Dr. Ferguson also served as a church planter and pastor and was a missionary to Ethiopia.

Dr. Ferguson served for many years as Professor of Old Testament at Christian Life College, Mount Prospect, Illinois. He authored many books, academic journal articles, Bible encyclopedia entries, and was a contributing author ("The Historical Reliability of the Old Testament") in *The Big Argument: Does God Exist?* (2006) edited by Ashton & Westacott.


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